

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T STATE 190448

NODIS
FOR THE AMBASSADOR ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RH, SA, IR

SUBJECT: JOSHUA NKOMO VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN

1. YOU MAY WISH TO DRAW FROM OR USE IN ITS ENTIRETY, THE
FOLLOWING BACKGROUND PAPER ON THE RHODESIAN SITUATION AS
YOU MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR JOSHUA NKOMO'S VISIT.

2. SETTING: THE VICTORY OF THE SOVIET AND CUBAN-SUPPORTED
POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA IN THAT
COUNTRY CHANGED THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CENTRAL AND
SOUTHERN AFRICA AND ALTERED THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE
REGION. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AFRICAN HISTORY, A COMMUNIST
MILITARY FORCE HAS BEEN INSTALLED ON THE CONTINENT; ITS
EARLY WITHDRAWAL IS UNLIKELY.

3. THE INTRODUCTION OF SOVIET POWER INTO SOUTHERN AFRICA
MUST BE A SOURCE OF CONCERN TO ALL NATIONS OF THE FREE
WORLD. THE MINERAL WEALTH OF SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS NEIGH-

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BORS AND SOUTH AFRICA'S COMMANDING POSITION AS ONE OF

THE WORLD'S MAJOR SEA ROUTES MAKES SOUTHERN AFRICA AN ATTRACTIVE TARGET FOR THE SOVIET UNION. THE PROSPECTS FOR SOVIET EXPANSION ARE GOOD IN RHODESIA WHERE IN 1965 AN ILLEGALLY CONSTITUTED EUROPEAN MINORITY REGIME TOOK

CONTROL. RHODESIA'S POPULATION IS ONLY 5 PERCENT EUROPEAN. SINCE 1965, BLACK NATIONALIST FORCES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZING THEMSELVES TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE AND IN THE LAST TWO YEARS ARMED CONFLICT HAS BROKEN OUT.

4. THE SOVIET UNION'S PRIVILEGED POSITION WITH THE MARXIST REGIME IN MOZAMBIQUE GIVES IT A SPECIAL ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE CRISIS IN RHODESIA. THE MAJORITY OF RHODESIAN GUERRILLAS ARE POSITIONED IN MOZAMBIQUE AND ARE ARMED WITH WEAPONS PROVIDED FROM COMMUNIST SOURCES.

5. THE SEARCH FOR PEACE: TO FORESTALL ANY FURTHER EXPANSION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN RHODESIA, THE UNITED STATES IS PURSUING ACTIVELY A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT TO THE CRISIS. THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAS MET WITH THE LEADERS OF THE KEY AFRICAN STATES, INCLUDING THOSE STATES MOST CONCERNED WITH THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM -- TANZANIA, ZAMBIA, BOTSWANA AND SOUTH AFRICA -- TO FIND COMMON GROUND FOR A SETTLEMENT. TOWARDS THIS END, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS THE PLAN WHICH PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 22.

6. THAT PLAN CALLS FOR ACCEPTANCE IN ADVANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF MAJORITY RULE; ELECTIONS IN EIGHTEEN MONTHS TO TWO YEARS AND NO INDEPENDENCE BEFORE MAJORITY RULE. IT CALLS FOR RHODESIA'S EUROPEAN POPULATION TO STAY AND ALLOWS FOR INCENTIVES IN THIS REGARD AS WELL AS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT STATE.

7. THE UNITED STATES IS FULLY COMMITTED TO WORKING FOR A SOLUTION IN RHODESIA. THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY ENJOYS CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT. AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND IN WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS FOLLOW TO

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ENSURE THE FUTURE OF THE NEW COUNTRY HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY RHODESIA'S AFRICAN NEIGHBORS AS WELL AS SOUTH AFRICA AND GREAT BRITAIN. WHILE MANY DIFFICULTIES LIE AHEAD, THE PROGRESS OF CONSULTATIONS HAS BEEN HEARTENING AND IT IS THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES THAT A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME IS POSSIBLE.

8. THE ROLE OF JOSHUA NKOMO: THE ABILITY OF MODERATE

BLACK LEADERSHIP TO TAKE CONTROL OF AN INDEPENDENT
RHODESIA IS CENTRAL TO THE COUNTRY'S LONGER TERM ABILITY

TO RESIST SOVIET INFLUENCE. THE STRONGEST NATIONALIST
CANDIDATE IS JOSHUA NKOMO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF RHODESIA'S
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS. NKOMO'S CREDENTIALS HAVE BEEN
FORGED OVER MANY YEARS. EVEN THOUGH HIS LEADERSHIP IS
CONTESTED BY INSURGENT MILITARY ELEMENTS AND OTHER
POLITICAL LEADERS, HE COMMANDS THE RESPECT OF ALL. HE IS
THE ONLY POLITICAL LEADER WHOSE SUPPORT CUTS ACROSS
TRIBAL LINES. NKOMO IS ALSO REGARDED BY MANY EUROPEANS
AS THE ONLY INDIVIDUAL CAPABLE OF BUILDING A MULTI-RACIAL
SOCIETY IN RHODESIA. NKOMO HAS DEALT WITH THE SOVIETS,
BUT HE IS NOT A MARXIST. RATHER, HE HAS LOOKED FOR HELP
WHERE HE COULD FIND IT AND FOR MANY YEARS THE SOVIETS
WERE WILLING TO PROVIDE HIM WITH MODEST ASSISTANCE.

9. NKOMO TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH
THE SMITH GOVERNMENT AND HIS MODERATE PROPOSALS WERE
REBUFFED. THE FAILURE COST NKOMO SOME SUPPORT AMONG
HIS COUNTRY-MEN. HE IS NOW SEEKING TO REBUILD THAT SUP-
PORT AND THEREBY PREPARE HIMSELF FOR RHODESIA'S POST-IND-
EPENDENCE LEADERSHIP. NKOMO'S CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE
GOOD.

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